DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 229 CS 204 063

AUTHOR Froese, V.
TITLE The "Arts" in Language Arts.
PUB DATE Nov 77
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (67th, New York City, November 24-26, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Art Expression; *Communication Skills; Elementary Secondary Education; Fine Arts; *Language Arts; Learning Activities; Nonverbal Communication; *Skill Development; *Teaching Techniques; Verbal Communication; Visualization; *Visual Perception

ABSTRACT

The ability to "image," or to conjure up verbal and nonverbal pictures, is fundamental to language arts activities. This paper lists eight imaging skills, which involve attention to details, sizes, multiple images, viewpoint, lighting, perspective, emotions, and structure, and suggests that each of these skills may be taught in conjunction with each of three receptive processes--listening, seeing, and reading--and four expressive processes--talking, drawing, acting, and writing. The art-related processes of seeing and drawing are included as a reflection of the close relationship of art and language arts. For purposes of illustration, the paper shows how students might develop attention to detail through observing objects, representing details in drawing, finding words to describe details, extending the skill of noting detail into writing, representing details through a series of movements, listening to details in music, and performing reading exercises emphasizing details. It also briefly indicates how the imaging skill relating to structure might be taught in conjunction with each of the receptive and expressive arts processes. (GW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED153229

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

V. Froese

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

The "Arts" in Language Arts

Dr. V. Froese

Paper presented at the National
Council of Teachers of English Conference
New York, Nov. 25, 1977

A poem by Walt Whitman expresses my theme most succinctly and hence I begin with it.

There was a child went forth every day;
And the first object he looked upon, that object he became.
And that object became part of him for the day, or a certain
part of the day, or for many years, or
stretching cycles of years:
The early lilacs became part of this child...
And the apple-trees covered with blossoms, and the fruit
afterward, and wood-berries, and the
commonest weeds of the road;

CS204063

And the schoolmistress that passed on her way to the school...
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain,
the crafty lure,
The family usages, the language, the company, the furniture
--the yearning and swelling heart....
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time--
the curious whether and how,
Whether that which appears is so, or is it all
flashes and specks?
Men and women crowding fast in the streets--
if they are not flashes and specks, what are they?
These became part of that child who went forth everyday,
and who now does, and will always go forth every day.

Each child, and each of us, carries with him a treasure of experiences, yet often we do not realize the uniqueness and richness of these images. As a teacher of language arts, first in the public school system and later at the university level, I have been awed by the difficulty we have in bringing these images to consciousness. And I have been surprised how much we have in common with the arts--undoubtedly the reason why we have incorporated this word into the designation "language arts." We, too, are concerned with the conscious production or arrangements of sound, color, form, movement, and words in a manner that effects the sense of beauty (American Heritage Dictionary, 1970, 74).

Through my classroom observations of students, student-teachers, and teachers I have gradually come to the realization that it is rarely mechanics, usage, and punctuation that are responsible for mediocre assignments but rather the inability to "image" effectively. I will use the term "image" to mean the ability to conjure up verbal and non-verbal pictures.

The ability to "image," as I will show, is fundamental to both the receptive and expressive arts. It is the ability to

image and to record that image that separates much of the exceptional work from the mediocre.

While the forgoing thoughts had been loosely associated in my mind, it was not until I read Art, Culture, and Environment: A Catalyst for Teaching (McFee and Dagge, 1977) that these associations formed a recognizable and useful system for me. A number of other works have contributed significantly to my scheme and deserve recognition at this point:

Boorman, J.
Dance and Language Experiences with Children
Don Mills, Ontario: Longman, 1973

George, M. Y.
Language Art: An Ideabook
Scranton: Chandler, 1970

Allen, R. V.
Language Experiences in Communication
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976

Wolsch, R. A.
Poetic Composition Through the Grades
New York: Teachers College, 1970

Pluckrose, H.
Creative Themes
London: Evans Brothers, 1969

Moffett, J. and Wagner, B. J.
Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976

For purposes of this paper I have limited myself to discussing the receptive processes of listening, seeing, reading and the expressive processes of talking, drawing, acting and writing. It should be noted that two art-related processes are included here: seeing and drawing. These were added to show the close relationship of art to language art and because in many integrated approaches all of these processes are intermingled during the course of the day. In each case I will show how the various imaging skills (adapted here from McFee and Degge)

may be related to these receptive and expressive processes and that the resulting matrix is a useful one in suggesting possible instructional approaches for the language arts.

Figure 1

Interaction of receptive and expressive processes and imaging skills

	Receptive			Expressive			
	Seeing	listening	reading	drawing	talking	writing	acting
Details							
Sizes							
Multiple Images							
Viewpoint							
Lighting							
Perspective							
Emotions							
Structure							

It should be noted that although the imaging skills are arranged in order from simple to complex, that such a hierarchy is not implied for the various receptive and expressive processes.

Let me now sketch in some details for the first row in Figure 1. That is, let us consider how the imaging skill--detecting details--can assist us in generating appropriate activities under the headings seeing, listening, reading, drawing, talking, acting, and writing.

First we must learn to focus our attention on detail. Perhaps the easiest way is to bend a coat hanger into a circular form and cover it with bright crepe paper so as to visually

separate a given area. A second method is to cut a rectangular opening into an index card to form a viewing frame.

With these tools we are ready to procede to the "seeing" process. If the weather allows, go outside and drop the hoop somewhere (on the grass, pavement, or gravel, or hold it against the building), then look closely at what is contained within the perimeter of the hoop. Indoors, the carpet, drapes, tiles, or walls will do. Observe the different patterns, textures, colors, lines, shapes, or other peculiarities of the area under observation. Touch the surface gently to get a kinesthetic representation.

From this activity it is easy to move to the drawing, talking, or writing stage.

Let us procede to the "drawing" first. Try to represent the observed area through using a variety of media: pencil lines, crayons, felt pens, chalk. Try white or colored paper. Use shading, cross-hatching, or a textured book cover under the paper. Experiment with several different combinations. Finally, cut out the circular shapes and mount the child's preferred work on a suitably colored background.

The forgoing activities lead quite naturally to talking or writing. We have now moved from the non-verbal to the verbal mode. What kinds of words can describe pattern? Irregular, flowered, parrallel, stippled? Which words describe texture? Silky, rough, furrowed, wavy? How may colors be labelled? Pale, vivid, mottled, transparent?

In extending this experience to writing prose or poetry, again many possibilities exist. A second or third observation

may be desirable or necessary to extend the skill of "noting detail" into writing. A suitable extension of the forgoing activity is into the production of catalogue verse or shape poems.

Rough
Black
Pitted
Oily
Overlayed with rubber

An alternative for prose writing might be to imagine falling down on the observed area with a pair of new jeans. What would they look like?

To move into the realm of creative movement, the detailed drawings may be discussed (or pieces of differently textured materials might be substituted). What kinds of movements would be bumpy, smooth, ribbed, fluffy? Combine a series of movements in a representation of the drawing or materials. Try to guess the sample being represented. An alternative is the simple play "The Defective Detective" from Plays for Reading (Educational Progress Corp., Palo Alto) which emphasizes the importance of observing clues.

One of the simplest methods of helping children hear details while listening is to play a recording of simple instrumental or vocal music. Let them attempt to determine which instruments are playing or how many different voices are heard. The suitability of recordings for this purpose naturally depends on the age level of the students involved but an excellent selection would be "Peter, Paul, and Mommy" (Warner 1785) or "The Giants of Jazz" (Columbia 8770). Alternatively one might use the "Carnival of

the Animals" (Columbia 4355) with verse by Ogden Nash to show how the instrumentation is coordinated with the various animals movements--for example, the tuba is representative of the elephant.

Reading exercises emphasizing details are perhaps the most readily available, since it is commonly considered one of the comprehension skills. Simply check the scope and sequence chart in any common basal series for stories incorporating this skill.

We have now completed the first row in our matrix as illustrated in Figure 1. Because of time limitations it is not possible for me to fill in the complete matrix, but I will illustrate even more briefly the last row. Hopefully by then you will have gleaned the structure I am proposing and will be able to generate your own ideas to fill the remaining spaces.

The last row in our matrix deals with the imaging skill "structure of things." We are concerned here with <u>how</u> things are formed and <u>why</u> they are formed that way.

Begin by observing common objects. Examine a scissors--why are the finger holes different? Peel and section an orange. What sort of pieces result? If it is possible to go outdoors, examine different types of leaves--simple, compound. Or examine the differences between deciduous and coniferous trees.

To sharpen children's seeing ability have them observe some common things like how doors open (to left or right, inside or outside). How many different screw heads can they find (slot, star, square, etc.)? How many different clock faces can they find (digital, Arabic numerals, Roman numerals, only some numerals, no numerals at all)? Or inspect an automobile closely;

What kinds of door handles does it have? What shapes of windows does it have? How high is it to the trunk opening? Are the bumpers specially constructed? What sort of non-functional trim does it have?

The drawing phase will be made easier by this initial observation. Perhaps another object such as a bicycle or skateboard could be used for drawing purposes. Remind them of the hows and whys. Check magazines for new designs.

To extend the procedure to talking activities, small groups may be organized (see Grouptalk idea) to discuss or speculate on the various hows and whys. Why are racing handlebars different from touring handlebars? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having narrow tires? Is it necessary to have 10 speeds?

Writing activities might include advertisements for bicycles, skateboards, or some other objects. Emphasize the special advantages and functional utility. The finished product might be displayed together with an appropriate drawing or schematic.

Movement exercises include pretending to be a scissors. Are the hands or the legs the scissor's handle? Can a scissors be made with two people? If the theme is extended to machines or toys, then three dimensional structures may be attempted. Can the objects move in some way? Pantomiming different machines could be another alternative.

In order to progress to listening activities the song "The Marvelous Toy" (Warner 1785) has proven to be effective.

It went zip when it moved
Pop when it stopped and
Whirr when it stood still...

A variety of characteristics are mentioned and it remains for the

listener to conjure up the image of the toy.

For intermediate and older children it would be appropriate to listen to Schumann's "Scenes from Childhood" with the object of identifying the relatively simple themes and the order in which they are arranged.

Reading activities again focus on the structure of writing. This could range from the consideration of stanzas or refrains in poetry to attempts to understand the styles of writing used in the Bible or a primer. Reading various styles of writing could naturally lead to attempts at writing in some preselected style.

It is hoped that the preceding discussion has demonstrated several things: (1) That a conceptual framework using the dimensions "imaging" and "processes (receptive and expressive)" coordinates a great deal of language and non-language communication, (2) that a matrix formed by these dimensions may be used to generate a host of integrated communication activities, (3) that all the "arts" described here are closely realated (whether language arts or fine arts), and (4) that by improving perception we have a good chance of improving the quality of language and non-language communication.

The quality of communication in any medium is dependent on the sensitivity with which we experience our environment. Perhaps it is most fitting to conclude by expressing this sentiment in Whitman's words:

> There was a child went forth every day;
> And the first object he looked upon, that object he became.
> And that object became part of him for the day, or a
> certain part of the day, or for many years,
> or stretching cycles of years...

Additional References

Gilbert, A. G. Teaching the Three Rs: Through Movement Experiences. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing, 1977.

Peck, R. L. and Peck, H. E. Art and Language Lessons for the Elementary Classroom. West Nyack: Parker, 1969.